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Evaluation

Management response to the evaluation of the second regional cooperation framework for Africa, 2002-2006*

Context, background and findings

1. The present document constitutes the response of UNDP management to the report of the independent evaluation of the UNDP second regional cooperation framework for Africa, 2002-2006. The framework was approved by the UNDP Executive Board at its first regular session in January 2002, and was subsequently extended for one year through 2007 in order to synchronize it with the corporate multi-year funding framework (MYFF), 2004-2007. The evaluation was commissioned by the UNDP Evaluation Office to assess the overall programme performance and outcomes of the second regional cooperation framework. A meta-evaluation of the framework assessed its strategic position, achievement of intended goals and results, performance with respect to policy advice, knowledge management and capacity development activities, synergies and partnerships.

2. The final draft evaluation report was structured around the customary evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The findings of the draft evaluation have provided useful inputs towards the formulation of the third regional cooperation framework for Africa (2008-2011).

3. Management was pleased to note the overall evaluation findings that: (a) the second regional cooperation framework for Africa maintained its relevance by being closely aligned to the development priorities of Africa and to the issues that the African leaders and peoples have identified within the framework of African Union, New Partnership for Africa's Development and Africa Peer Review Mechanism as critical for the development of the region – good governance, higher levels of shared economic growth and development, gender equity, peace-building,

* The compilation of data required to provide the Executive Board with the most current information has delayed submission of the present document.

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recovery and conflict prevention as well as making globalization work for the continent; (b) the deliberate efforts made to address these development issues, all of which have transboundary implications, through the platform of regional public goods, in which joint/or collective action and greater regional cooperation can add value and are particularly suited to the African context; and (c) provision of strong support to efforts of African countries and their development partners at accelerating the pace of progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

4. Management was satisfied to note from the findings of the Evaluation that the Second Regional Cooperation Framework for Africa reinforced the foundations for responding more successfully to emerging issues such as the delivery of energy services for the poor, to the adverse development impacts of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, particularly on the capacities in the countries and the need for more vigorous efforts at sustainable environmental management. Management was also satisfied with the conclusion of the Evaluation that the regional cooperation framework made significant contribution to strategic partnership building, knowledge sharing and exchange of best practices among the stakeholders, which facilitated dialogue and confidence building among the policymakers and practitioners as well as development of joint plans of actions for addressing transboundary development issues.

5. Equally, UNDP management has taken serious note of the issues raised by the independent evaluation. In the annex to the present document, following the standard template, management presents detailed responses to each of the recommendations and the key issues raised, and proposes concrete follow-up actions with time frames and responsible units.

Annex
Evaluation of the Second Regional Cooperation Framework for Africa, 2002-2006
(April 2007)

Evaluation key issue Selection of thematic areas should be based on the following criteria: (a) UNDP has a comparative advantage; (b) African priorities as identified by key regional institutions such as the African Union, NEPAD and APRM; (c) Links to UNDP mandate and objectives including MDGs, the strategic plan and UNDP global and country programmes; and (d) Issues have trans-border or international dimensions or are more likely to progress if removed from the domestic context.[1]		
Management response: The selection of the focus areas under RCF II for Africa was informed by these considerations. Particular attention is being paid in the preparation of RCF III to adhere to the principles of UNDP comparative advantage and mandate; Africa's development priorities as identified by the regional institutions, Governments, CSOs and other key stakeholders; UNDP strategic plan and priorities, including MDGs; and the concept of regional public goods and transboundary initiatives in the selection of possible thematic focus areas under RCF III.		
Key action(s)	**Time frame**	**Responsible unit(s)**
(a) The preparation of RCF III, which is ongoing, is based on all the principles and considerations recommended for the selection of the thematic focus areas. (b) RCF III is being prepared through a participatory consultative process, involving UNDP units and all key stake-holders, notably Governments, regional and sub-regional institutions, CSOs, private sector and external partners. (c) The corporate guidelines for the preparation of regional programmes are also being strictly adhered to.	September 2006 – June 15, 2007	Office of the RBA Director and Strategic and Regional Initiatives Unit (SRIU)/Policy and Strategy Division.
Evaluation recommendation 1 *Maximize African ownership of the regional programme.* Greater use of the Advisory Board should be made, to ensure that RCF has the capacity to identify and respond to evolving African development challenges while firmly anchored in African realities. This would help ensure that institutional and capacity development targets are being achieved. RBA should revise the terms of reference for the Advisory Board to ensure regular Board meetings, and the Board should be provided with regular reports on the progress of the framework against agreed gender-sensitive, quantitative and qualitative indicators and changes in the environment. This flexibility must take place within the context of, rather than replace, a long-term strategic plan.		
Management response UNDP concurs with the recommendation to strengthen oversight of RCF implementation and ensure effective African ownership of the regional programme. A		

[1] See also, Evaluation of UNDP regional cooperation framework for Arab States (2002-2005), p. 51

pre-condition is a well-functioning Advisory Board representative of the key stakeholders and comprised of experienced development experts and practitioners.		
Key action(s)	**Time frame**	**Responsible unit(s)**
1.1. Advisory Board for the regional programme has been reconstituted, with revised terms of reference.	2008-2011: Reconstituted Advisory Board established in December 2006.	Office of the RBA Director and SRIU/Policy and Strategy Division.
1.2. Advisory Board will meet regularly and systematically, at least twice a year.	Inaugural formal, face-to-face meeting scheduled for end-May/ early June 2007. Regular meetings and consultations will be maintained thereafter.	Office of the RBA Director and SRIU/Policy and Strategy Division.
1.3. Comprehensive status reports on the implementation of the regional programme will be prepared and presented systematically to the Advisory Board for review and strategic guidance.	Consultations have been taking place with members since February 2007.	Office of the RBA Director and SRIU/Policy and Strategy Division.
1.4. Advisory Board will closely monitor the implementation of the regional programme, ensuring its continuing adherence to the indicators cited above as well as its relevance to the development priorities of Africa.	Consultations have been taking place with members since February 2007.	Office of the RBA Director and SRIU/Policy and Strategy Division.
Evaluation recommendation 2 *Streamline the focus* of the next RCF to a maximum of three clearly defined themes with fewer outputs and outcomes under each. RCF should focus on regional priorities of strengthening democratic and participatory governance; conflict prevention; peacebuilding; and disaster management. RCF resources should be concentrated on capacity-building for a smaller number of larger interventions, linked to existing regional African institutions. Many current programmes and activities should be phased out prior to the end of the second RCF. Decisions to allow current projects to be carried over into the next RCF implementation period need to be based on clear, consistent criteria, with a cap of project funding allowed for carry-over – suggested at 25 per cent of RCF total funding.		
Management response (a) Management concurs that sharper focus of the regional programme will contribute significantly to its effectiveness, impact and sustainability. (b) Related to the issue of focus is the emphasis on fewer, potentially higher impacting larger interventions as opposed to the situation under RCF II. (c) There will be a systematic but orderly phasing-out of RCF II projects and programmes. (d) The recommendation for a 25 per cent cap on the project funding to be allowed for carry-over into RCF III is acceptable. (e) The proposed focus areas for RCF III are broadly those recommended by the evaluation team: MDGs; reinforcement of participatory democracy and good governance initiatives in Africa; conflict prevention and recovery; pro-poor growth; poverty reduction; gender equality; and environmental sustainability.		
Key action(s)	**Time frame**	**Responsible unit(s)**
2.1 Four major focus areas have been proposed for RCF III, which is deemed to be optimal.	Approval of the proposed areas by the RBA Directorate, after endorsement by the Advisory Board, is due in June 2007.	Office of the RBA Director and SRIU/Policy and Strategy Division/Country Operations Divisions.

	Strategic framework for RCF III preparation, ready July 2006. Final decision on RCF III focus areas to be taken in June 2007.	
2.2 RCF III projects will incorporate clear exit strategies, and carry-over of RCF II projects is based on criteria embedded in the strategic framework for the preparation of RCF III.	Criteria for determining which projects to carry over into RCF III from RCF II has been determined and is being applied.	Office of the RBA Director and SRIU/Policy and Strategy Division/Country Operations Divisions.
2.3 Further decentralization of the management of regional programmes from New York.		Office of the RBA Director and SRIU/Policy and Strategy Division/Country Operations Divisions.
2.4 Only broad oversight functions to be maintained in New York.		Office of the RBA Director and SRIU/Policy and Strategy Division/Country Operations Divisions.
2.5 Outposting of Country Operations Department to the regional service centres.		Office of the RBA Director and SRIU/Policy and Strategy Division/Country Operations Divisions.

Evaluation recommendation 3

Improve coordination between regional and country programmes in Africa. This can be achieved by decentralizing two regional Bureau Deputy Directors, with joint responsibility both for the regional programme and country programmes, to locations in Africa.[2]. The regional programme in Africa should develop the capacity of regional and pan-African institutions to deliver their mandates. Partner institutions should be provided with financial planning/management tools and training. Consistent with overall UNDP financial management policies and regulations, maximum responsibility c should be transferred to them as a component of overall capacity development and institutional strengthening.

Management response

(a) Better coordination between regional and country programmes will be facilitated through the decentralization planned under the new RBA strategy for the management of regional programmes in the field and the outposting of the country operations divisions from New York to the regional service centres.
(b) Better synergy between the regional programme and country programmes should to be achieved by assigning responsibility for the oversight of regional programmes to offices in the outposted country operations divisions.
(c) All the implementing partners for regional programme projects will be familiarized with, and their staff trained in, the financial management, procurement and operational rules and regulations of UNDP.
(d) The maximum allowable autonomy under overall UNDP financial management policies and regulations will be accorded them.
(e) Management is committed to a closer working relationship with the Regional Bureau for the Arab States (RBAS), starting with close involvement of RBAS in the formulation of RCF III and implementation and monitoring of the supporting projects and programmes.

Key action(s)	**Time frame**	**Responsible unit(s)**
3.1 Implementation of the RBA restructuring strategy, and/or decentralization of the direct oversight/management of regional programmes to the regional service centres.	2008-2011 RBA Restructuring is expected to kick in by July 2007.	Office of RBA Director/Policy and Strategy Divisions/Country Operations Divisions.
3.2 Management of the regional projects will be assigned to	October – December 2007	Office of RBA Director/Policy and Strategy

[2] Proposed as part of the RBA management structure reform in the strategy and management review, New York, May 2006.

Deputy Directors, Country Operations Divisions. This is expected to ensure the closer linkages and synergies between the regional projects and country programmes.		Divisions/Country Operations Divisions.
3.3. Sensitization and training of concerned staff of all the implementing partners of the RCF III supporting projects and programmes will be organized before implementation of the Regional Programme commences.	2008 -2011	Office of RBA Director/Policy and Strategy Divisions/Country Operations Divisions.
3.4 Training and exposure of staff of implementing partners will facilitate granting of more autonomy to them in the execution of the projects.	July 2007 and thereafter continuous	Office of RBA Director/Policy and Strategy Divisions/Country Operations Divisions.
Evaluation Recommendation 4: *Enhance pan-African synergies through improved information sharing and enhanced cooperation between the regional bureaus of Africa and the Arab States.* Establish a joint UNDP Africa and Arab States representative office in Addis Ababa for respective accreditation to pan-African institutions, such as AU and ECA. This would facilitate the participation of North African countries in pan-African activities.		
Management Response: The UNDP Representation Office with AU and Liaison Office with ECA in Addis Ababa is being revitalized. UNDP and ECA have signed a new Partnership MOU and Compact, whose effective implementation, will facilitate joint activities with Pan African Institutions as well as cooperation with North African countries. The UNDP Partnership Agreements/MOUs with the African Development Bank and Islamic Development Bank will also facilitate joint work with regional institutions and cooperation with RBAS countries. Using the framework of the new RBA Strategy for Capacity Development, the RCF III will make a more systematic contribution to the long-term and more effective capacity development of regional and sub-regional institutions in Africa, that will allow them to deliver more effectively on their mandates.		
Key Action(s)	**Time Frame**	**Responsible Unit(s)**
4.1. Regular coordinating arrangements with RBAS to be instituted.	July 2007	RBA/RBAS/BRSP
4.2 The new Head of the UNDP Representation and Liaison Office in Addis Ababa to be appointed by June 2007.	Continuous	RBA/RBAS/BRSP
4.3 Implementation of the MOU with ECA will be stepped up.	Continuous to 2011	RBA/RBAS/BRSP
Evaluation Recommendation 5: *Incorporate gender equality and environment across all interventions.* Both should be required in the planning and formulation of initiatives for the future. Sufficient financial resources for gender mainstreaming and environmental sustainability (in each and every project) should be allocated for all future projects if gender and environment are to be integrated as cross-cutting themes.		
Management Response: RBA is cognizant of the need for a more effective gender mainstreaming in all development initiatives, including those supported by it.		

It has, therefore, already instituted a three-pronged approach to address this issue: with clearer policy, capacity development and resources dimensions.

The same approach applies to sustainable energy and environment issues.

Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)
5.1 Full implementation of the RBA strategy for effective mainstreaming of gender and environment.	October 2007 - 2011	Office Of RBA Director/Policy and Strategy Division/Country Operations Divisions

Evaluation Recommendation 6:
Clarify roles, responsibilities, accountability and reporting structures to effectively implement Results Based Management. The RCF should adopt an enhanced results based performance management, measurement and reporting system. Similar performance measurement frameworks, including clear programme level indicators of achievement, should be developed at the thematic and the RCF level. Project level reports should be rolled up into thematic and regional programme level reports at a minimum annually for presentation to the Advisory Board.

Management Response:
The planned restructuring of RBA will ensure a more effective and efficient management and implementation framework for the regional Programme, with clearer and less bureaucratic reporting lines.

The RCF III document does adopt a more results-based management and monitoring system, including regular reporting.

Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)
6.1 Institution of a more streamlined supervision, monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the regional programmes as part of the RBA restructuring.	October 2007	

Evaluation Recommendation 7:
Include in project budgets funds explicitly ear-marked for monitoring systems, including the development of indicators, baseline data, data sources and collection methods as well as responsibility and timing of collection for the outcomes and impact levels.

Management Response:
The RBA Management is not only committed to a more rigorous monitoring of project implementation, but has also stipulated that at least 10% of each project funds should be earmarked for monitoring and evaluation activities.

Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)
7.1 Allocation of adequate funds for project monitoring and evaluation.	October 2007 - 2011	SRIU/Policy and Strategy Division/Country Operations Divisions/Regional Service Centres.